



The Sixty-sixth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,675th Concert

Opera Lafayette

Ryan Brown, *conductor and artistic director*

Meghan McCall and Adria McCulloch, *sopranos*

Eric Sampson, *tenor*

Darren Perry, *baritone*

Ryan Brown and Elizabeth Field, *violins*

Henry Valoris, *viola*

Jodi Beder, *cello*

Jeffrey Watson, *piano*

May 11, 2008

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Treasures of the Paris Opéra Comique

Pierre Alexandre Monsigny (1729–1817)

From *Le Déserteur* (1769)

Ouverture

Ariette (Louise)

Marche de la noce

Duo (Alexis et Jeanette)

Couplets et Duo (Bertrand et Montauciel)

Air (Courchemin)

Félicien David (1810–1876)

From *Lalla Roukh* (1862)

Mélodie (Lalla Roukh)

Couplets (Baskir)

Romance (Noureddin)

Récit et chœur (Ensemble, Chorus of Slaves)

Couplets (Mirza)

Duo (Lalla Roukh et Noureddin)

Duo bouffe (Baskir et Noureddin)

The Musicians

OPERA LAFAYETTE

Based in Washington, DC, Opera Lafayette is a period instrument ensemble dedicated to performances of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French operas. Since its debut in 1995, Opera Lafayette has garnered both critical acclaim and a loyal following for its concert and staged opera productions with well-known American and international artists. Its New York City debut in October, 2007, was lauded by the *New York Times* for “the crisp, resilient playing of the period orchestra, bringing the lilting dance music to colorful life.” The *Washington Post* characterized the ensemble as “one of the most intellectually exciting fixtures of the Washington music world.” Opera Lafayette records for Naxos and its discography includes Gluck’s *Orphée et Euridice* (released in 2005), Sacchini’s *Oedipe à Colone* (2006), and Rameau *Operatic Arias* (2007). Future releases include Lully’s *Armide* (2008) and Rebel and Francoeur’s *Zélindor, roi des Sylphes* (2009). More information on the ensemble and its recordings is available at operalafayette.org.

Opera Lafayette is supported by AREVA, Inc., Pernod Ricard USA, Constellation Energy, The Marpat Foundation, The Nancy Peery Marriott Foundation, GoDaddy, Quatt Associates, and more than 200 individuals whose generosity makes possible the ensemble’s performance season. With support from the Nancy Peery Marriott Foundation, Opera Lafayette has initiated a young artists program in which it works with selected young professional singers and gives them opportunities to work with specialists in the field of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music. Meghan McCall, Adria McCulloch, Darren Perry, and Eric Sampson participate in this concert in the context of the young artists program.

RYAN BROWN

Ryan Brown is the conductor and artistic director of Opera Lafayette. His vivid interpretations of operas from the eighteenth century and classical French repertoire have been praised by critics in the United States and abroad. In October 2007 he led the ensemble in the modern world-premiere presentation of the French opera-ballet *Zélinde, roi des Sylphes* at the Music Center at Strathmore and at the Rose Theater in Frederick P. Rose Hall in New York City. His explorations of rarely heard baroque operas and recordings with Naxos have received rave notices from France's ClassicsToday.com and from the magazines *Das Opernglas*, *Fanfare*, *Gramophone*, *Opera*, and *Opera Now*. Prior to establishing Opera Lafayette in 1995 and turning his attention to conducting, Brown had a successful career as a violinist and chamber musician. He toured Europe, Japan, and the United States with The Four Nations Ensemble and made six highly praised recordings of baroque and classical music for the London-based Gaudeamus label.

MEGHAN MCCALL

Meghan McCall has been praised for her “bell-like clarity and fine control” and “radiant full-bodied voice” in the *Washington Post*. The young American soprano's career has already taken her to stages in Europe and the United States, where she has performed the roles of Fatime in Carl Maria von Weber's *Abu Hassan*, Fiordiligi in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Madame Altina in Pasatieri's *La Divina*, Lauretta in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, and Musetta in *La Bohème*. Upcoming engagements include Eve in Haydn's *Creation* with the University of Maryland Symphony Orchestra and the soprano role in Bach's *Coffée Cantata* with François Loup and Harmonious Blacksmith. McCall is a 2007 graduate of the Maryland Opera Studio at the University of Maryland.

ADRIA MCCULLOCH

Adria McCulloch's rich soprano voice has been described as "world class" by the *Washington Post*. Raised on a farm in Alberta, Canada, she is a 2007 graduate of the Maryland Opera Studio at the University of Maryland. Last season McCulloch performed three roles with Opera Lafayette: the title role in Gluck's *Armide*, Une Bergère in Lully's *Armide*, and Donna Elvira in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. She has performed with Calgary Opera and Opera Nuova in Edmonton, Alberta; has sung in recitals across western Canada; and has performed with the Regina Symphony Orchestra and the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra.

ERIC SAMPSON

Eric Sampson is a lyric tenor from northern New Jersey and a recent graduate of the Maryland Opera Studio at the University of Maryland. He has performed many roles, including Bénédict in Berlioz's *Béatrice et Bénédict*, Laurie in Adamo's *Little Women*, and the title role in Massenet's *Werther*. He recently performed the role of Sheldon Segal in the Washington premiere performance at the National Gallery of John Musto's new opera, *Later the Same Evening: An opera inspired by five paintings of Edward Hopper*. In 2006 Sampson was a winner of the Washington, DC, District Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and he was recently seen as a member of Tulsa Opera Young Artists. Other engagements include performing the role of Gastone and covering the role of Alfredo in Opera Cleveland's production of *La Traviata*. Sampson has performed with New Jersey Opera Theatre, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, and Spoleto Festival USA. He is a student of François Loup.

DARREN PERRY

Baritone Darren Perry has been praised for his powerful vocal ability, flawless musicianship, and compelling performances. In November 2006 he was hailed by the *Washington Post* as “an outstanding Don Giovanni, by turns charming and disgusting, vocally strong and a fine actor.” Perry is a two-time winner of the Washington, DC, District Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and has received two encouragement awards at the regional level. Last season he debuted with Opera Cleveland as Baron Douphol in *La Traviata* and Mr. Lindquist in *A Little Night Music*. Other highlights include Hidroat in *Armide* with the Maryland Opera Studio and Opera Lafayette, and the title role in *Don Giovanni* with the Maryland Opera Studio. Perry received bachelor of music and master of music degrees in vocal performance from the Maryland Opera Studio at the University of Maryland, College Park, under the auspices of director Leon Major and voice teacher François Loup.

ELIZABETH FIELD

Violinist Elizabeth Field has been concertmaster of the Bethlehem Bach Choir since 2001 and is the leader and soloist of a newly formed group, The Vivaldi Project. She has also served as guest concertmaster for organizations including the National Philharmonic, the North Carolina Opera Company, Opera Lafayette, and the Washington Bach Consort. Field is the 2007–2008 Alan and Wendy Pesky artist-in-residence at Lafayette College in Pennsylvania. Field performs regularly with the chamber group ArcoVoce and the Eisenstadt Trio, and appears occasionally as a guest artist with Hesperus. She was a founding member of the Van Swieten Quartet, which performed from 1989–1998, and was the violinist for Brandywine Baroque from 2000–2006. She can be heard on Hungaraton Records in a world premiere recording of flute quartets by Johann Joachim Quantz with baroque flutist Mary Oleskiewicz, in a recording with ArcoVoce of music ranging from Hildegard von Bingen to Shostakovich, in several recordings on the Dorian label with Brandywine Baroque, and in Opera Lafayette’s recordings on the Naxos label.

HENRY VALORIS

Henry Valoris performs on both modern and baroque viola with various ensembles in the greater Washington, DC, area. Most recently, he has performed with the Bach Sinfonia, Cantate Chamber Singers, and Opera Lafayette, and has recorded Handel's *Messiah* with the National Cathedral Choirs. He is the operations manager for Opera Lafayette and has also done administration work for the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and the Bach Sinfonia. In 2006 he received a bachelor of arts degree in music with highest distinction and with interdisciplinary honors in theater and music from Penn State University, where he studied viola with Timothy Deighton. He is currently completing a master of arts degree in arts management at American University.

JODI BEDER

Jodi Beder is the principal cellist of the Princeton Symphony Orchestra. She also plays with the Palm Beach Opera, Princeton Pro Musica, and the Riverside Symphonia. In the Washington, DC, area, she has performed with the Folger Consort, the Low End String Quartet, the National Philharmonic, and Washington Musica Viva, among others. She has been a principal member of Berkshire Opera, the Chamber Opera Theater of New York, the Lake George Opera Festival, and Opera Antica. She is also an improviser and a committed interpreter of contemporary music and has performed and recorded microtonal music. She has collaborated with many dance and theater companies and is a member of the innovative cabaret-rock band Zen for Primates. Beder holds a Ph.D. in music from the City University of New York Graduate School and University Center and attended the professional studies program at Mannes College of Music.

JEFFREY WATSON

Pianist Jeffery Watson has appeared as soloist with the Honduran National Symphony, the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra (with the Kirov Ballet), the Pan American Symphony, and the Rosario Chamber Orchestra of Argentina. Watson was pianist with the internationally acclaimed tango quintet, QuinTango, which performed with Orquesta Sinfonica Sinaloa de las Artes (Mexico) and the Wichita Symphony, among others. In addition to performances at Lincoln Center, he has appeared at the Piccolo Spoleto Festival and the International Tango Festival in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. He was the associate conductor for the Kennedy Center's award-winning production of *Sunday in the Park with George* (as part of its 2002 Sondheim Festival) and music director and coach for the Maryland Opera Studio at the University of Maryland, where he has directed productions of *Fatal Song*, *Tale of Two Cities*, and *Noel & Cole*. Watson is on the faculty of the Washington Conservatory of Music and is the music director of the Bowen McCauley Dance Company.

The Program

Though little known today, Pierre Alexandre Monsigny's *Le Déserteur* and Félicien David's *Lalla Roukh* are both masterpieces that originated in the French popular opera tradition known as the *opéra comique*. This tradition, which grew out of the entertainments of the Parisian fairs in the early eighteenth century, matured in the second half of the century into a unique genre that spoke to the lives and passions of the middle class. Comic opera provided a contrast to the grander offerings enjoyed by the upper class at the Paris Opera, which focused on mythological and historical subjects. Both types of opera were immediately successful and continued to be popular in France and abroad throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Le Déserteur, one of several collaborations between Monsigny and the librettist Michel-Jean Sedaine (1719–1797), is a passionate harbinger of the romantic rescue opera. The overture offers a musical synopsis of the plot. The happy and forthright opening tune is interrupted by a highly melodramatic minor section, followed by a lilting pastorale. These latter moods alternate, unresolved, until they are interrupted by a trumpet call, which then returns to the joyous opening section. In the plot, the soldier Alexis' furlough is disturbed by the false rumor that his fiancée, Louise, has married another. He is distraught, deserts the army, and is thrown in jail. Louise visits him there and Alexis realizes she still loves him. The plot is resolved only when Louise, back in the public square, throws herself in front of the king as he visits his troops and pleads for his mercy and intercession. The excerpts performed in this concert include Louise's opening aria, in which she declares her love for Alexis and her reluctance to see him wronged; the duo in which Alexis hears the devastating (false) news of Louise's marriage to another; and a comic interlude in which a country cousin, Bertrand, sings a tune about the goodness of men with a jailed drunk who sings of wine and women. Finally, a courtier, Courchemin, recounts the story of Louise's encounter before the king. Opera Lafayette will give the modern American premiere of *Le Déserteur* in its entirety in concert performances in Washington, DC, and New York City in January and February 2009.

David's *Lalla Roukh* is an exquisite piece of orientalism, based on a poem published in 1817 by the Irish poet Thomas Moore (1779–1852). In *Lalla Roukh*, a young princess (Lalla Roukh) is to wed the King of Samarkand, whom she has not yet met. In the meantime, however, her heart has been stirred by the troubadour Nouredin. Her opening *Mélodie* is a reverie touched with sadness. The mood turns comic when Baskir, her self-important guardian, enters and sings of the difficulty of watching over such a young lady. In the third excerpt, *Romance*, Nouredin sings a love song to Lalla Roukh, while Baskir tries to get rid of Nouredin by throwing him money. Nouredin promptly gives it to accompanying slaves, but accepts a flower from Lalla Roukh. After an interlude sung by a chorus of slaves, Lalla Roukh's female companion, Mirza, makes fun of love, men and women, youth and age in her *Couplet*. Then night descends, setting the scene for a ravishing *Duo* between Lalla Roukh and Nouredin. The last excerpt is a rollicking *Duo bouffé*, taken from Act II, in which Baskir and Nouredin now laughingly conspire together, singing "Tout ira bien demain" (All will go well tomorrow) and "Tant pis ma foi, pour ce bon roi" (Too bad for this good king). In the finale, not sung in this program, it is revealed that Nouredin is in fact none other than the King of Samarkand, who has disguised himself in order to win Lalla Roukh's love without the distractions of power and riches.

When *Lalla Roukh* debuted in 1862, the director of the Opéra Comique paired it with Monsigny's *Rose et Colas* (1764), which represents the idyllic pastoral world of Rousseau in much the same way that *Lalla Roukh* portrays an idyllic love wrapped in the perfumed images of the East. Although *Le Déserteur* represents another aspect of Monsigny's oeuvre, Opera Lafayette is pleased to be able to present these two composers on the same program once again, and to offer a sampling of the undiscovered treasures of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century opéra comique.

Program notes by Ryan Brown

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

Great Noise Ensemble

Armando Bayolo, *conductor*

Marcantonio Barone, *pianist*

Music by Armando Bayolo,
Evan Chambers, Blair Goins,
Andrew Rudin, and Barbara White

May 18, 2008

Sunday evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of
the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

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